

Testimony opposing SB 337, February 17, 2009
An act prohibiting the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, from relocating bison as a result of the state-federal bison quarantine feasibility study.

Mr. Chair and committee members, my name is Ilona Popper and I live in Gardiner, MT. I oppose SB 337 because it flies in the face of science and it will let our ranchers down.

Is this bill proposed in order to prevent the spread of brucellosis? It will fail to work because the number one vector for brucellosis is elk. I have closely questioned Dr. Thomas Roffe, Veterinarian and Chief of Wildlife Health for the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Dr. Roffe was an informational witness on HB 253 in these halls only few weeks ago.

Dr. Roffe states that "Wild bison have not yet transmitted brucellosis to cattle and data show bison are a low risk vector for transmission." We easily keep bison away from cattle. Bison live in the open, move slowly, and are few (3000 in the GYA). The state has already succeeded in containing the low risk that bison pose for transmitting brucellosis.

Dr. Roffe goes on, "The data, habitat use, and proof of infections all point to elk as the number one problem for transmission of brucellosis. If you address the elk problem, afterwards you might look at the risks posed by a small bison population. Elk are the main transmitter because there are so many (120,000 in the GYA), they travel in all terrains, they give birth away from their herds all over the landscape, mingle with cattle, and pass on disease in feed lots.

Is this bill an answer to ranchers' fears about brucellosis free status in our state? No, because free ranging bison are not spreading brucellosis. Don't mislead ranchers into believing that SB 337 can help restore brucellosis-free status to our state because it can't. An even bigger fairytale is that bison from the quarantine will transmit brucellosis. These bison have exceeded all testing standards required by APHIS. They've passed higher tests than any in the world for cattle or domestic bison. The protocols were developed by experts, approved by the US Animal Health Association, open to the livestock industry, and are part of the bison EIP and the Interagency Bison Management plan. Montana FWP and the Board of Livestock reviewed the protocols—twice.

Killing quarantined bison deprives tribes of their cultural right and perpetrates a lie: you can kill the bison in quarantine, and kill bison that leave Yellowstone National Park, and keep them from the tribes, and *still* you will fail to prevent the spread of brucellosis and fail to restore our brucellosis-free status in Montana—because you've got the wrong animal!

In proposing this bill, do you mean to prevent the spread of brucellosis or are you caving into misinformed fears? Bill SB337 has no basis in science or fact and if you vote for it to appease unfounded fears, it's bad legislation. This bill will give ranchers a false sense of security and will have no effect whatever on containing brucellosis. If you want to fix our brucellosis problem, get the science right and target the right animal: elk. Please don't waste tax payers' monies, don't mislead our ranchers, and don't waste our time: Vote against SB 337.

Thank you.

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11:50 PM
Tues Feb 10th
2009

The Native Buffalo Land

Hi folks I'm Saddleup Johnson, from
Johnson's Mountain, Tardine. <sup>I am a Full Blooded
Chippewa Cree!</sup>
I was Born - Raised here 46 1/2 - 47 years

Sept 22nd!
I am a Local Cowboy poet, I'm also a writer,
I'm a wild Bird photographer, Busy with Nat-
The Bald Eagles, Ospreys, Golden Eagles, Red Tailed
Hawks, The Owls, and the ~~Canada~~ Canadian
Geese are all cousins, they are Native Indian
history for their feathers & ceremonies, they
represent our Buffalo, some are Beautiful American Flag!

The Buffalo Been here many moons long
Before us, let them be free go to the Indian
Reservations! they will get "TLC"!
I for one watch the Buffalo as they have been
coming into my home, I filmed them here are 5
of my pictures, I'm starting a Research Study -
"IT'S ALL"
"Home on the Range", "This is Indian Culture", "Heritage",
"This is our Buffalo history", "Montana out on the Prairie!"

Buffalo Have Roamed This Country, Spent
Many miles on the trail / I for one watched
my Relative Gerald Ryder Ride Horse Back
Through Gardiner, Pushing a huge herd of our
migrating Buffalo, Somewhere I have a picture
of a Retired Park Ranger from YNP!
He would tell you about all this, You'd think
twice "Buffalo Nature"! Ranger Ryder!
Come on, "Oh give me a home, where the
Buffalo Roam"!

for I see it that the Indian Buffalo stories,
will be no more forever, "Give it chance"!
We tip our cowboy hats, we say our cowboy
prayer, we stand for old glory, the national
anthem, R.W.B., the star spangled banner, we
bow our heads! Want Gardiner to listen
up? ^{Will} Turn a Big huge Buffalo herd loose
through the town Gardiner, Hoping to Re-

Kick off the Gardiner Rodeo!
"Bright Lights - High Lights", put on the Buffalo
show!! Don't call it quits, tell us ^{not} its, End of the
trail"! "BUFFALO USA"! Sincerely ^{Thank you -} Charlotte Johnson
579 Indine Road